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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 001400

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FOR NEA/FO, NEA/RA, AND NEA/ARPI

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KU](#) [TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: GWOT ASSESSMENT: KUWAIT

REF: A. STATE 60749

[B](#). KUWAIT 1159

[C](#). KUWAIT 1104

[D](#). KUWAIT 730

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Summary: Counterterrorism remains at the top of our bilateral agenda and post has experienced increased cooperation from the Government of Kuwait (GOK) in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) since January when a series of security incidents revealed to the GOK a home-grown threat. There is better information-sharing, the GOK is generally responsive to action requests, and the Government has taken steps to strengthen domestic laws, better train and equip security personnel, and come into compliance with international CT agreements. Nevertheless, there is still much to be done and the U.S. can make a positive and lasting contribution, especially in the areas of terrorist financing and training. The Ambassador chairs monthly meetings of the post's Counterterrorism Working Group (group members include the DCM and section heads from POL, ECON, RMAS, RSO, CONS, DIALO, and OMC-K) to assess terrorism threats to U.S. interests in Kuwait, evaluate the GOK's progress on CT measures, and to identify areas for U.S. influence (refs b and d). The CWG recommends a refined CT strategy for Kuwait address terrorist financing, increased training, and public diplomacy. End Summary.

Terrorist Financing

[1](#)2. (C) The GOK recently signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and agreement is pending parliamentary ratification. Despite this positive step, there remain holes in the system: there is no means to track cash flows out of the country and the Central Bank's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) cannot share information with other FIUs without prior approval from the Public Prosecutor for each instance. Kuwait needs, and post has requested, the Terrorist Finance Working Group (TFWG) provide expert assistance to the GOK for devising appropriate to criminalize terrorism-related finance, thereby further strengthening current money laundering legislation.

[1](#)3. (C) In addition to the need for strengthened legislation, there is a real need to enhance the judicial branch's counterterrorism capacity. GOK officials readily admit that expertise in financial crimes investigations within both the Public Prosecutor's Office and the judiciary is quite thin and officials do not know what to look for when presented with a suspicious transaction report. During an April 2004 visit by Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) Director William Fox, Public Prosecutor Riyadh Al-Hajeri responded eagerly to FinCEN's offer of technical assistance (ref c) which post strongly believes should be on-site training in Kuwait. Training should be preceded by an OPDAT team visit for an in-depth needs assessment of the judicial system's ability to combat money laundering and terrorist finance operations.

Specialized Training

[1](#)4. (C) Kuwait lost several security officers in the January and February raids on terror cells and has since placed an emphasis on the need for better training. Hundreds of Kuwaitis have participated in the Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) courses and post has requested, at GOK expense, security operations center training for mid-level managers. Kuwaitis also participate in CENTCOM consequence management training and post has invited Kuwaitis to take part in the mid-April "NESA Center Seminar on Combating Terrorism in the New International Security Environment." Kuwait recognizes U.S. expertise in training and post recommends increased funding for training opportunities, especially in financial crime investigation, computer crimes, crime scene investigation, and CT analysis. Refresher courses should also be offered so that skills do not erode. Post further recommends the establishment of an International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) for the Gulf states.

15. (S/NF) DIA is considering allocating resources for increased engagement with Kuwaiti Military Intelligence through the new Force Protection Directorate. The Directorate has a special need for organizational development, equipment recommendations, staffing, and training. This is a unique opportunity to influence the GOK tactical approach to CT and the U.S. should take advantage of it. RMAS is also providing training and seeking opportunities to expand it.

High-Level and Public Engagement

16. (C) The Ambassador regularly raises GWOT issues with Kuwaiti leadership, but visits by senior USG officials would reinforce to decision-makers that CT is a U.S. priority. If still offered, the International Counterterrorism Policy Workshop, would provide a useful forum to discuss CT strategies and responses, bringing together representatives from different ministries. Although the National Security Bureau was recently tasked to coordinate GOK CT efforts, a stovepipe structure persists and hampers real progress. Not only would the presence of a U.S. interagency team send a strong message about the importance of intra-government cooperation, but also signal to GOK leaders, who claim an imbalance in the relationship, that the U.S. considers Kuwait an important partner in the GWOT.

17. (C) Post also recommends a continued aggressive public diplomacy campaign. Kuwaiti officials have often said that public relations is our biggest weakness in the GWOT. Newspapers and satellite stations repeatedly ran pictures of Iraqis reportedly injured by U.S. and coalition forces , but there were few, if any, images of insurgent arms caches or torture chambers. Kuwaitis wanted to see these pictures. Post has excellent relations with the local media and could easily place op-eds and photos on the destructiveness of terrorists and their actions. This is an effective and low-cost approach. We also need to do everything possible to make sure that we respond quickly and transparently to allegations related to treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo and elsewhere.

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